

**Speech by H.E Madam Men Sam An, Deputy Prime Minister, and
High-level representative of Samdech Akka Moha Sena Patei Techo
Hun Sen, Prime Minister of Kingdom of Cambodia
On the occasion of ILO's 90th anniversary.**

Chatomuk Conference Hall, Phnom Penh, 27 April, 2009

- H.E. Vong Sauth, Minister of Labor and Vocational Training
- H.E. Sachiko Yamamoto, ILO's Regional Director for Asia-Pacific,
- Representatives of workers and employers organizations,
- Representatives of UN agencies and NGOs,
- National and international distinguished guests

In the name of Samdech Aka Moha Sena Padei Techo **Hun Sen**, Prime Minister of the Kingdom of Cambodia and on my behalf, I would like to express my whole hearted warm welcome to your presence on the ILO's 90 anniversary, celebrated this year at Chatomuk Conference Hall, Phnom Penh, Kingdom of Cambodia. It is a celebration of the anniversary of Cambodia's development partner and good friend. Importantly, I have the honor to welcome H.E. Sachiko Yamamoto, ILO's Regional Director for Asia and the Pacific. Her presence today clearly reflects the relationship she and the ILO have with Cambodia, and the commitment that ILO will continue its cooperation with Cambodia.

Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen!

In this auspicious occasion, in the name of the Royal Government, I have great pleasure to recall on a number of souvenirs in which Cambodia had with ILO.

The Kingdom of Cambodia joined the ILO in 1969, the year that the Nobel Peace Prize was awarded to this organization for its effort to promote social justice and peace among nations in the world under a slogan: "universal and lasting peace can be established only if it is based on social justice." The two simultaneous events were a symbol of fruitful achievements for Cambodia, and at this time we wish to extend our thanks to ILO's contributions in rehabilitating Cambodia.

I would like to take this opportunity to remind the floor that ILO was founded after the First World War, to be a mechanism for building universal peace through social justice.

At the beginning, the ILO's program seemed to be vast compared to the challenges of the time. However, at the present time, i.e. at a time of a profound global economic and social upheaval, the *message*, *mandate*, and *approach* of ILO are bringing hope for people worldwide and for Cambodia as well. We are gathering here today to celebrate the ILO's achievements of integrating social justice and fair globalization into countries' policies around the world.

The Royal government of Cambodia (RGC) has fully supported the *ILO Declaration (2008) on social justice for a fair globalization*, in accordance with the *Philadelphia Declaration of 1944*, and the *1998 Declaration on the fundamental principles and right at work* that and the 2004 of the World Commission on the Social Dimension of Globalization.

Thirteen international labour conventions have been proudly ratified by the Kingdom of Cambodia, eight of which are ILO core conventions on freedom of association and collective bargaining, elimination of forced labor, elimination of child labor, equality and elimination of discrimination in employment.

On behalf of RGC, I would like to praise ILO for its cooperation with Cambodia since the UN transitional administration and for its employment generation program in 1992 and 1993. After Cambodian conflict ended, ILO found ways to sustain development. In the past, this organization provided constructed necessary infrastructure including rural roads, bridges, drainage system and water gates.

Furthermore, ILO was a leading organization providing micro credit that has succeeded well, i.e. ACLEDA Bank, which started as micro financing program under ILO's support. So far, it has transformed to be a stable and growing bank.

ILO and UNESCO in collaboration with RGC rehabilitated the infrastructure of Angkor Wat that created jobs for thousands of people and contributed to this wonder heritage's conservation.

Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen!

There has been much other work relating to the cooperation between RGC and ILO. Allow me to emphasize two important contributions of ILO. First, *the labor dispute resolution project* that provides technical and financial support to the Arbitration Council of Cambodia, which is a tripartite body playing an important role to solve labor disputes between workers and employers. The second is a great effort of the Royal Government of Cambodia in cooperation with ILO, which helped Cambodia to become a leading garment product supplier. Cambodia has gained international recognition as a country with good working condition, enabling it to attract more investments. The Royal Government of the fourth legislature of the National Assembly, led by **Samdech Aka Moha Sena Padei Techo Hun Sen**, set forth the rectangular strategy phase two, which regards private sector as a crucial locomotive for Cambodian economic development.

I am proud to inform you all that between 2004 -2007, Kingdom of Cambodia gained an average of 11.1% of GDP. But times have changed, as we are well aware of global financial crisis which already affects workers, the private sector and the people as a whole. The 2009 forecasts vary, but a common feature is that growth will decrease as a result of the economic downturn.

Let me recall the unanimous approval of the *ILO's statement on social justice for a fair globalization* that reaffirmed our commitment to open economic and society while appealing for strengthening of activities at national and sub-national level and of development partners to fight against poverty.

Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen!

The current situation, not only the financial crisis, but other issues in which the globe as well as Cambodia challenged, are consequences from a combination of financial crisis and climate change. RGC has been implementing its national strategy and zones on greening that will cover all sectors of Cambodian economy. The Green job agenda is a core to enhance this strategy and I hope that ILO will continue its cooperation and partnership to invest in green economy to

promote sustainable jobs and economic growth. As a development partner to help construct Cambodia, I am proud to recognize ILO and its projects as a model in implementing a green growth initiative.

RGC has built confidence between workers and employers through efforts of development of vocational training in order to guarantee the skilled and qualified labor forces. Training on prioritized skills were focused especially those skills that enable people to get jobs. RGC has provided an amount of about 30 billion Riels to prepare scholarships for retrenched workers and jobless youth to enable them to get new job or creating their own businesses. RGC, led by **Samdech Aka Moha Sena Padei Techo Hun Sen**, has worked very hard to avoid *“a situation in which there are many people holding high degrees but cannot find jobs, and a situation in which there are many employment opportunities but there are no skill and human resources to do the job.”*

During its third mandate, with technical assistance of ILO, the RGC established a national social security fund, an institution in charge of implementing the law on social security. Strategically, we have divided implementation into three phases: occupational injury insurance, health care and pension. At the time of the global financial crisis that is eventually affecting Cambodian economy, in order to ensure social protection as well as sustainability of garment and shoes factories, RGC has lowered employers' contribution rate from 0.8% to 0.5% for the two sectors.

Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen!

As I have already mentioned, we can see clearly that close cooperation between RGC and ILO is being strengthened for a common goal of equitable and social justice for all Cambodians. The RGC's rectangular strategy phase 2 states clearly the goal which is “for growth, employment, equity and efficiency” and the third angle of the strategy on private sector development states that “Job creation and ensuring better working conditions for workers.” I strongly believe that ILO, which is one of our development partners, will continue working with RGC to realize the goals of the strategy.

In the name of RGC, I would like to appeal to all ministries, institutions, private sector, workers, national and international civil society organizations to re-double their cooperation to cope with and overcome consequences of the global economic downturn and join together to solve all potential challenges based on the spirit of mutual understanding.

Once again, in the name of RGC and my behalf, I would like to extend my congratulation to the celebration of ILO's 90th anniversary. Taking this opportunity, I would like to extend my profound thanks to the presence of Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen at this time. I wish the new angel of the Khmer New Year, which we just celebrated, always take care of you all. I also wish you the four Buddha's blessing, *longevity, power, health and strength*. I also wish **H.E. Sachiko Yamamoto** and our honorable national and international guests with good health and successes in all of your endeavors.

Thank you for your attention!